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Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities

Statement submitted by International Movement ATD Fourth World, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

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Statement

2005 is a landmark year for the United Nations, and indeed for every member of the world community. In particular, those living in extreme poverty around the world are hoping that their expectations will be met, and that finally they will be able to foresee a future for their children of true freedom, free from extreme poverty. In the words of a parent who often goes without food so that his children can go to school: "our children must not endure what we had to live through."

As we review the actions of the last five years in working towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, and look towards 2015 and beyond, we need not remind ourselves of the extreme urgency of the goal of the eradication of poverty. However, if the international community continues to fail to recognize and utilize the contribution to development that people with first-hand experience of extreme poverty are willing and able to make, the MDGs and other international goals to eradicate poverty will not be reached. As people living in poverty continue to be seen as mere recipients of assistance, their own efforts and hopes are often overlooked. Despite their frequent invisibility, "families all over the world remain the most vital force in the battle to eradicate poverty... The mutual caring, sharing and nurturing that family members provide for one another are often the essential elements that allow people living in poverty to survive each and every day."[1]

In his recently released report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", the UN Secretary-General writes that every human being should be free from want and describes extreme poverty as poverty that kills. International Movement ATD Fourth World agrees that extreme poverty is a genuine risk to life. It ends the lives of people due to hunger, preventable diseases, violence and exploitation, and many other results of poverty. But it also prevents women, men and children from developing their full potential, being respected, and living in dignity. It excludes people from the human family and prevents them from participating in the social and political lives of their communities and nations.

The founder of the International Movement ATD Fourth World, Joseph Wresinski, defined extreme poverty as follows: *"A lack of basic security is the absence of one or more factors that enable individuals and families to assume professional, family and social responsibilities and to enjoy fundamental rights. Such a situation may become more extended and lead to more serious and permanent consequences. Extreme poverty results when the lack of basic security simultaneously affects several aspects of people's lives, when it is prolonged and when it severely compromises people's chances of regaining their rights and of reassuming their responsibility in the foreseeable future"* (See E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/13, annex III).

Joseph Wresinski was born into poverty and throughout his life established major landmarks in the fight against the worst forms of poverty, in collaboration with other partners and primarily the very poor themselves, in industrialized as well as developing countries.

The success of poverty eradication initiatives must be rooted in the realities of the lives of the people they are trying to help. Only through genuine partnership will change come. This is illustrated in the following example, particularly relevant in this International Year of Microcredit.

In the late 1990s, a woman living on the street in West Africa shared a testimony during the commemoration of the International Day of the Eradication of Poverty. On that day, her public commitment to stop begging had a huge impact on those gathered, but raised the question of how to support her and others to find a better means of survival. ATD Fourth World's subsequent consultation with the community resulted in the planning and implementation of a microcredit project. However, ATD Fourth World's experiences in other countries made it clear that no single approach fits all members of a community. In Central America, a woman said about a

[1] See *How Poverty Separates Parents and Children: A Challenge to Human Rights* (International Movement ATD Fourth World, 2004).

microcredit project: *"I cannot participate because I cannot stand the looks my neighbors give me. They know a lot about me and so they laugh at my situation. They know private things: that my partner abandoned me, that some of my children live in the streets and use drugs, and that... my morale is at rock bottom."* Later, after the entire community had been involved in the project, new relationships of trust led the men and women involved to perceive themselves differently. The woman commented, *"Now when people scorn me in the street, it affects me less. I know that there is something other than begging."* All of the participants discussed guidelines that would respect everyone and take into account the realities of their lives. This process and the long-term support and respect that followed ensured success and the personal investment of time and energy enabled the participants to play a vital role in the fight against poverty rather than merely receiving aid.

The scandal of inequalities in our world demands immediate action and we agree with the Secretary-General when, in his report entitled "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", he advocated the launch of a series of "quick-win" initiatives so as to realize major immediate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (A/59/2005, para. 5 (h)).

At the same time, the Secretary-General noted in the report that development successes cannot take place overnight and many countries suffer significant capacity constraints (A/59/2005, para. 31). At the country level we mustn't forget that the fight against poverty and extreme poverty is a long-term and ongoing process which requires the commitment of all; notably States, intergovernmental agencies, the private sector, civil society, and citizens.

This long-term process particularly requires:

- the building of a better understanding of extreme poverty and exclusion, considering the poorest as important experts in this field, and the entering into a genuine dialogue with them,
- the development of laws and policies which take account of this knowledge and expertise and recognize the distinction between poverty and extreme poverty,
- the continual evaluation of the policies in the framework of the following questions: What is the social impact of these policies on the most vulnerable? Who is not being reached by our actions? What must be changed within our actions in order to reach them?

  Evaluations must look at the various levels and types of poverty, or the most fragile will be overlooked.
- the support of those who choose to fight against poverty alongside the poor and the poorest, so they are able to continue and expand their efforts in the long term.

These principles apply to action in both industrialized and developing countries. The persistence of extreme poverty in industrialized countries demonstrates that a high general level of wealth is insufficient alone to eradicate extreme poverty and social exclusion, and that ambitious reforms are necessary tools in a democracy to unceasingly build policies that are rooted in the realities of the most excluded.

The following quote from people who used to live in the streets in Eastern Europe demonstrates the strength of many people in spite of the many hardships they must endure: "We are the people of perseverance. Tell everybody they must not give up the fight. Tell them we want to be in contact with them throughout the world. Because when you realize that you are among many of us who are moving forward together, you keep your courage in order to encourage others." We must move forward in partnership with people living in extreme poverty in order to ensure that the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals are met.

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Statement submitted by All Pakistan Women's Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

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Islamabad Plan of Action

We, the participants of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the MDGs assembled in Islamabad, Pakistan from 28 to 30 March 2005 agreed and urged the following:

Appreciating the insightful and comprehensive deliberations of all participants of this Conference; the support of the host Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan to the Conference; the tremendous preparatory work for the International Conference since 2003 at the initiative of APWA, UN-NGO-Informal Regional Network (IRENE) National Coordinator of Pakistan, as part of its commitment to strengthen its contribution to the ECOSOC work in implementing the MDGs, and mark the centennial birth anniversary of the All Pakistan Women's Association's (APWA) founder and Patron-in-Chief, Begun Raa'na Liaquat Ali Khan, who unceasingly promoted the empowerment of women and universal cooperation; and the support and sponsorship of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF and UNESCO, in partnership with multi/bilateral donors, including the Asian Development Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and Gender Equality Project (The British Council and the Department for International Development), media and the corporate sector,

Taking into account the current threats, challenges and opportunities, and the necessary work needed in order to achieve gender equality and promote comprehensive gender based approaches to the MDGs especially in 2005 as it marks the 60th Anniversary of the United Nations, the +5 Review of the Millennium Development Goals and the Millennium Declaration, and the +10 Review of the Beijing Platform for Action;

Being in full agreement with the above and the recommendations, the participants of the International Conference on Gender Mainstreaming and the Millennium Development Goals, hereby commit ourselves to disseminate and work towards its implementation; and we call upon Governments, NGOs, private sector, Civil Society organizations and other institutions to increase their efforts to achieve by 2015 gender equality and the MDGs to:

1. Fully integrate gender-sensitive perspectives and the rights-based approach in the international and national agendas, in the campaign and global efforts to attain the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, and as a priority when developing strategies, formulating economic, social and political policies and programmes, developing macro-economic fiscal and trade processes, and promote partnerships among key stakeholders.

2. Comply with the principles of good governance, the rule of law and the right to development, and fully support the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming as one of the means to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

3. Urge Governments of all countries to:

   3.1 Act upon their commitments to achieve gender equality, the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs, and to promote the integration of these goals in policies, activities, legislation and development programmes;

   3.2 Strengthen their dialogues, programmes, activities and partnerships related to gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve the centrality of MDG Goal 3: to promote gender equality

and to empower women, for effective implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs by 2015;

3.3 Secure political will, along with mechanisms for implementation such as gender sensitive electoral code and legislation for political parties to enforce reserved quotas for women, and monitoring and follow up to the role of women in parliament, decision-making and action;

3.4 Eliminate gender-based discrimination and empower women to gain equal access to opportunities, formal and informal employment, economic security, legal rights, and political participation including decision-making positions;

3.5 Empowering institutions that empower women through education, financial support and affirmative action policies in education, employment, economy and politics;

3.6 Ensure human rights and legal protection of men and women, including policies to halt violence against women, sexual harassment, exploitation and human trafficking, by formulating or strengthening national legislation, litigation systems and international policies, monitoring systems and sanctions;

3.7 Engage and encourage women to play a significant role in conflict-prevention, peace keeping, and peace-building efforts in countries under stress and in post-conflict regions;

3.8 Eradicate poverty and hunger throughout the world, especially in rural areas and for rural women, through comprehensive strategic policies based on needs/resources assessment and realistic development approach for poverty eradication, sustained economic growth and sustainable development for all;

3.9 Promote integrated rural development programmes that engage local communities, governments and civil society through social programmes, education, vocational training, microfinance and credit, assets and job creation, natural, financial and human resource management and development;

3.10 Facilitate international financial assistance, promote partnership with civil society and support NGOs, grassroots organizations and local initiatives contributing to development and humanitarian efforts;

3.11 Promote locally adapted gender sensitive programmes and facilities to provide equal access to: (i) preventive education on STDs, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases; (ii) basic and reproductive healthcare professionals; (iii) treatments and drugs; (iv) preventive services and supplies;

3.12 Pursue national legislation and social programmes to protect the equal rights and access of ageing and disabled peoples;

3.13 Ensure universal primary education for both girls and boys by funding education programmes, eliminating school fees, training teachers in gender sensitive skills and curricula, and ensuring necessary infrastructure.

4. Urge all stakeholders to:

4.1 Address parental, cultural and traditional concerns about the role of girls and women through social awareness programmes and localized information campaigns in focus areas;

4.2 Promote education and reduce women and girl illiteracy through substantial and adapted programmes to empower women and girls;

4.3 Encourage integrated and holistic approaches and efforts regarding poverty eradication and cross-sector programmes for sustainable development that engage all important stakeholders, including civil society, with efforts at the local, national and international levels;

4.4 Combat disease through comprehensive gender sensitive healthcare services and education;

4.5 Promote partnership initiatives, projects and programmes between Governments, the United Nations, International Donors, Local Authorities, NGOs, Academia, the Private Sector and Civil Society in fulfilling their commitments to the Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and Gender Equality.

5. Urge the International Community to:

5.1 Engage all stakeholders in partnership programmes, including coordinating transborder issues such as the trafficking of human beings, environmental degradation, the proliferation of diseases (such as HIV/AIDS and STDs), conflicts and refugee management and poverty eradication;

5.2 Enhance international funds and financial support for projects, with gender sensitive criteria and financial allocations, and engage international financial institutions and funds to efficiently participate in achieving the MDGs;

5.3 Promote women in leading international positions, including in the United Nations system;

5.4 Promote dialogue, communication and cooperation among different cultures, religions and societies, and promote social integration and solidarity through effective public policies involving civil society, women, underrepresented peoples and minorities, indigenous peoples, youth, ageing and the disabled;

5.5 Strengthen the international monitoring, evaluating, auditing, reporting and follow-up processes for all countries to assess progress and take the necessary measures to achieve the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs with gender equality and gender justice.

At the same time, we, the participants emphasize and call upon all members of the national and international community and vital stakeholders to:

6. Enhance their political will and their financial support to translate commitments into action.

7. Acknowledge the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

8. Reaffirm international support for the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Millennium Declaration, recognizing the role of gender equality as fundamental to and mutually reinforcing the development efforts, including the global efforts to achieve and implement the MDGs.

9. Support participatory follow-up, regular monitoring and evaluation at all levels (national, regional and international) of the process and fully contribute to the outcomes of the current +5 Review of the MDGs, the recent +10 Review of progress on implementing the Beijing Platform for Action as well as the Sessions of the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

10. Support interested NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC to follow-up the implementation of the Islamabad Plan of Action with other stakeholders. An international meeting held each year at the initiative of a different host country could ensure an effective implementation.

11. Request APWA to submit in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Development, Government of Pakistan, the Islamabad Plan of Action in the format of a statement to the 2005 High-Level Segment of ECOSOC, to be considered in the Ministerial Declaration of the ECOSOC.

We, the participants, therefore, reiterate that we will always bear in mind, dedicate and commit ourselves to our responsibilities, to fully realize, and work towards the implementation of the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals, using gender mainstreaming as an effective tool for the empowerment of women and for achieving gender justice and equality between women and men.

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Statement submitted by the Foundation for Social Promotion of Culture, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

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* E/2005/100.

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Presentation of the Foundation for Social Promotion of Culture

As representative of the Spanish Foundation, the Foundation for Social Promotion of Culture, I would like first to thank the NGO section of DESA for organizing this forum. Our Foundation which has the general consultative status with ECOSOC is playing a major and concrete role in the field with the support of the UN-NGO-IRENE to enhance its contribution to the ECOSOC work in implementing the MDGs and the Millennium Declaration

Since its establishment in 1987, the Foundation is focusing its activities on the promotion of the social and economical development, in agreement with the human being self-respect and with the cultural identity of social groups and nations. Its main projects are implemented across the Mediterranean area in 7 countries, South America and Asia. They are related to education, rural development, capacity building and other sectors and especially promotion of peace, which is an objective of the Barcelona Declaration of 1995 as well as a major challenge for the United Nations. More than 130 projects have been executed by FPSC in collaboration with more than 32 different local partners and NGOs for a total amount of more than 50 millions of euros.

During the period 2001-2004 the Foundation has implemented 78 projects in Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon. All the projects are part of a four-year Strategic Plan called Strategy for the Development of the Mediterranean area, co-financed by the Spanish Agency for International Co-operation of the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation.

With regard to Structure and working methodology all the projects are being implemented directly on the spot through local partners who are the experts on each sector of intervention. The Foundation is responsible for the correct formulation and close follow-up of each project, through its permanent delegations in the different countries. The Foundation is also providing whenever necessary technical support through external consultants in the required subjects.

The Foundation encouraged the creation of the READI (Euro Arab network for the development and the social integration) to promote the Euro-Mediterranean dialogue through the permanent communication among local agents (civil society, private sector and public administrations). Currently 44 organizations from both sides of the Mediterranean are part of the READI, which help them bring their voice and work to international forums and share their experiences with the NGO community and other stakeholders.

As a result of this work, the Foundation together with the READI organized several annual meetings where organizations specialized in different sectors discuss common subjects, and draw conclusions and recommendations of great utility for international donors, local communities and all agents involved.

To evaluate in depth, the impact of its strategy and its effective contribution to the implementation of the MDGs in the Mediterranean region, FPSC hired an external consultant team to carry out an independent evaluation of the whole Strategy. The conclusions of this evaluation will be published together with the final report of the Strategic Plan.

The evaluation will consider two different perspectives: on the one hand the classical perspective based on the general accepted criteria: Effectiveness, efficiency, impact, relevance and sustainability; on the other hand a new perspective based on the Millennium Development Goals trying to determine how our projects belonging to the strategic plan have helped to the achievement of the MDGs, in each of the countries where the Foundation works.

Taking into consideration the conclusions of the evaluation and after analysing current geographical and sectoral priorities of the Foundation, a next Strategic Plan 2005-2008 will be prepared, continuing the work done up to now and tackling new challenges.

This work will be finalised shortly and hopefully presented to the ECOSOC HLS of 29 June – 1 July 2005.

Finally it is important to mention that statistics related to each MDG, each project and each country are available at the Foundation.